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ABSTRACT

The results of a survey on the nature of social attitudes toward language learning are presented. A review of previous surveys indicates strong community support for language learning, but those surveys did not contain information specific enough to explain why language enrollments are declining in Australia. For the present survey, three hundred subjects were interviewed at random, divided equally into groups termed "migrants," "Australian-born," and "students." Several strong trends emerged: (1) a favorable overall attitude: (2) oral skills were favored: (3) the failure to develop oral skills to an acceptable level was seen as the main factor causing students to drop out of language learning: (4) support for some sort of language requirement: (5) early introduction of language instruction: and (6) "student" attitudes tended to be less favorable than those of the general public. The results of this survey confirm those of previous studies. They suggest that the root causes for the "malaise" in language teaching lie in the inappropriateness and ineffectiveness of what the system has offered, and the damaging effects of many administrative decisions. (AMH)

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COMMUNITY ATTITUDES TO LANGUAGE LEARNING IN SCHOOLS

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COMMUNITY ATTITUDES TO LANGUAGE LEARNING IN SCHOOLS*

Introduction

It has become commonplace amongst language teachers in Australia to lay much of the blame for declining language enrolments on adverse social attitudes, on the difficulty, workload, or boredom of language study, or on timetable competition with other subjects [e.g., Department of Education 1976:49; Working Party on Languages and Linguistics 1976:29; Committee on Foreign Languages, Australian Adademy of the Humanities 1975:26]. In fact, administrative decisions have been made predicated on an acceptance of at least some of these factors. In Queensland, for instance, the Secondary Staff Inspector (Curriculum) has promulgated to schools a document on the core curriculum which omits explicit mention of second or foreign language study but devotes two of the seven categories to Mathematics and Science. When challenged, his justification is that society demands Mathematics and Science but not language study. Similarly, despite having received both oral and written submissions on language study, the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education in Queensland in its several reports published throughout 1979 and early 1980 omits any mention of language study although it discusses at length and recommends universal computer training and sex education. One must infer that the Select Committee of politicians felt that language learning was not a socially sensitive issue.

However, such views do not accord with the results of surveys published through the 1970's and, in undertaking this survey, the author

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* The survey and the preliminary analysis of results were carried out by Hélène Vial, Carmel Ahern, Filomena Piscitelli and Ann Louden, students at Mount Gravatt C.A.E., under the supervision of the author.

wished to examine again the real nature of social attitudes towards language learning. In doing so, it was hoped to gain insights into some of the reasons for the present adverse situation confronting languages in schools and to identify socially relevant means by which it might be rectified.

Previous Surveys

Although there have been a number of surveys into social attitudes to language learning conducted by commercial research firms or Government committees, none have sought information specific enough to explain why language enrolments are declining. Invariably, however, they have shown strong community support for the principle of language learning. In 1970, a Morgan Research poll conducted for the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on the Teaching of Asian Languages and Cultures in Australia showed 93.7% of persons surveyed in favour of the teaching of Asian languages, though only 8.9% thought they should be compulsory for all [Commonwealth Advisory Committee 1970:18]. A poll published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in October 1976, showed that 92% of parents surveyed wanted their children to learn foreign languages at school, preferably starting in the Primary School and with emphasis on the development of listening and speaking skills [see *Education Abstract*, No. 244, November 1976, p.2]. Smolicz and Seccombe in 1977 reported other surveys which found strong indications of support from both "ethnic" and "Anglo-Australian" groups for the teaching of ethnic languages and cultures in Australian schools [Smolicz and Seccombe 1977]. Another Morgan poll published in June 1978 indicated that 90% of Australians thought a "foreign language" should be taught [*The Bulletin*, June 6th, 1978, p.25] while a Gallup Poll in May 1977 found 49% asking for a second language to be compulsory [*Courier Mail*, May 3rd, 1977, p.28]. This last

survey showed the preferred languages, in order, to be French, Italian, Japanese, Indonesian and German. The present survey sought again to identify social attitudes to language learning, the factors that contribute to them, whether different attitudes are exhibited by "migrants", Australian-born, and students, and whether L_1 speakers of different languages have different attitudes. In doing so, it was hoped that insights would be gained into some of the reasons for the present low level of enrolments.

Method

Three hundred Subjects were interviewed at random, one hundred in each of the groups "migrants", "Australian-born", and "Students". The "migrant" and "Australian-born" groups were further sub-divided into those whose L_1 was English (34% and 82%) and those whose L_1 was other than English (66% and 18%). The interviewers, four Second Year students training to teach French in the Secondary School, used a prepared questionnaire (see Appendix 1) and interviewed the "adult" Subjects at random on Saturday mornings in four shopping areas in Fortitude Valley, Cannon Hill and West End in Brisbane and in Ipswich, a mining, industrial and "dormitory" town, about 30 kilometres west of Brisbane. The student Subjects, all of whom were training to be teachers of some sort, were interviewed at random in the canteen of Mount Gravatt C.A.E.

Results

The results are shown in the accompanying tables.

Several strong trends emerge in these results. First, the overall attitude is very favourable; second, oral skills are overwhelmingly favoured and, third, the failure to develop them to an acceptable level is seen as the main factor causing students to opt out of language learning;

fourth, at least some students should be required to take a language and all should be strongly encouraged to do so; fifth, language teaching should start in the Primary School; and, sixth, "student" attitudes tend to be generally less favourable than those of the "general public", "migrant" attitudes are generally more favourable than those of the "Australian-born", and, similarly, people whose L_1 is other than English tend to be more favourable than those whose L_1 is English.

Attitudes towards compulsory language study in school seem somewhat inconsistent. Although Questions 1 to 3 deal with this issue, the three questions yield results differing in emphasis. Thus, in Question 1, only 10%, 31%, and 12% of students, migrants, and Australian-born ask for languages to be compulsory but, in Question 2, 34%, 69% and 53% ask for languages to be compulsory as far as Grades 9, 10 or 12 with the largest non-student percentages (44% and 27%) opting for compulsory language study up to Grade 12. Despite this inconsistency, it is clear that all groups want language learning to be at least strongly encouraged, this being confirmed by Question 1 where 54%, 77% and 67% supported either strong encouragement or compulsion. Similar support (except from the students) is apparent for the view that a language should be a requirement for university entry, 71% of migrants and 65% of Australian-born supporting this notion. It seems safe to conclude from the first three questions, firstly, that a large majority of the population supports the view that language study should at least be strongly encouraged and, secondly, that a large majority of the non-student population believes that the academically stronger students ought to be required to take a language. In such circumstances, it might be considered (as we shall do subsequently) whether the decision to study a language or not should be left to the inexperience and immature judgement of young adolescent students.

Question 4 looked at similar issues but asked whether, in a multi-cultural society, teachers ought to experience language learning as an obligatory part of their training. For Primary teachers, the support for compulsion is at about the same level as for school students (viz., 6%, 25% and 13%) and for Secondary teachers it is only slightly greater (5%, 35% and 15%). Once again, there is firm support, especially from the adult groups, for the view that language learning should be at least strongly encouraged for teachers (36%, 70% and 58% for Primary teachers and 34%, 77% and 58% for Secondaries). This contrasts markedly with the present situation in most Colleges where, at Mount Gravatt C.A.E. for example, fewer than 1% of students take a language. It is especially significant that support for at least strong encouragement for student teachers to learn a language came from the non-English-L_1 Subjects (71.4% for Primary teachers and 77.4% for Secondaries). These Subjects would undoubtedly be particularly aware of the problems that culturally and linguistically insensitive or uninformed teachers can cause for their children.

The nature of language teaching in the schools was examined in the remaining questions. Question 5 sought to identify the languages people thought should be taught. All three groups agree quite closely, giving a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) of .84 to .9 except for the non-English-L_1/English-L_1 correlation which is lower at .79 but .88 if Modern Greek is eliminated. All three groups put French first and German and Japanese as second or third. When the figures are analysed for English-L_1 and non-English-L_1, a similar result occurs except that the latter put Italian and Greek ahead of Japanese. Indonesian, Italian and Chinese were next in preference, followed, with support mainly from students and English-L_1 Australians, by Vietnamese. The order of preference

for the non-English-L_1 migrant Subjects is interesting especially since West End, one of the suburbs used in the survey, is predominantly Greek while Fortitude Valley is the nearest shopping area to New Farm, an Italian suburb. The non-English-L_1 migrant order for the first ten languages was French, German and Italian, Modern Greek, Japanese, Latin and Chinese, Spanish, Indonesian, and Vietnamese. In fact, English-L_1 and non-English-L_1 Subjects agree closely on which languages should be taught except that the latter rank Modern Greek considerably higher at four than the former at fourteen. Other interesting results include the low preference given to an Aboriginal language (except by students, who equated it with Italian), Arabic, Classical Greek, Esperanto, and Serbo-Croatian. In an era when community languages have, in theory if not in practice, been stressed, the strong support for French by all groups is notable. To some extent this may be because people tend to endorse the status quo but its cultural, international and practical virtues undoubtedly also contributed. Nevertheless, support is well distributed over most of the languages. This suggests a need to diversify the languages currently offered in schools in order to provide more freedom of choice. Some support for this view is also found in Question 8 where the statement that the wrong languages are taught was rated as one of the more important reasons for low enrolments except, surprisingly perhaps, by the migrant and non-English-L_1 Subjects.

All groups agree that the principal reasons for teaching a language (hence, the implied objectives) are in order to communicate with others and to develop better cross-cultural attitudes and understanding (rho's from .98 to .996). The traditional goals of intellectual discipline, "good education", and to improve one's own first language are least favoured. Clearly these results lend no support whatsoever to the

conservative view that focussing on practical skills is seen as trivializing language study and is thereby responsible for "turning students off" [see Leopold 1979]. In fact, Questions 7 and 8 greatly reinforce the view that what society wants from language study is practical proficiency, especially in the oral skills. In response to Question 7, speaking and understanding (the oral macroskills) were supported by over 80% of all groups and 94% of students. The implications are clear: people want their children to be able to converse in the foreign language and students also see this as the principal goal.

Furthermore, when asked in Question 8 why they thought language enrolments had declined, all groups indicated that the traditional focus on translation and literature with the concomitant failure to develop practical skills to a satisfactory level of proficiency was the most significant reason. The reasons commonly stated by teachers and administrators (reasons such as the difficulty or boredom of language study or the supposedly adverse effect on matriculation results) received little support from any group. It is also of interest to note that the vocational relevance of languages, as reflected in three of the items, rates as only moderately significant though the English-speaking and Student groups rated it slightly higher than the others.

All groups were largely in agreement (rho = .87 to .91) on the factors needed to improve language teaching with particular emphasis falling on improved methods, especially methods relating to experience of real language and interaction with native speakers. Thus, community involvement requiring learners to make contact with native speakers in the community, using native speakers for conversation practice, and having more fluent teachers and better teaching methods were rated by all groups as the four most important ways to improve language learning. Significantly, theoretical arguments based on what is known

about language learning and attitude change lead to the same conclusion [see Ingram 1978, 1979]. Equally clearly, all groups are against a reduction in time allocation (which would reduce proficiency levels attained) but want, rather, to see changes effected that will improve what is going on. In fact, their view of the present success of language teaching is very adverse. On a 9-point scale from 1 (Total Failure) to 5 (Highly Successful), 59% of Students, 45% of Migrants and 60% of Australian-born rate its success at 2 or 2+, and 82%, 67%, and 75% respectively rate it between 2 and 3. Students, whose experience of language teaching is most recent, are particularly severe, 92% rating its success below 3. Only 8%, 9% and 11% rate the success of language teaching above 3 and these are balanced by almost the same number who consider it a "Total Failure".

There is very strong support from all population groups for language learning to start in the Primary School. Approximately 85% of all groups surveyed advocated that it start somewhere in the Primary School, the majority wanting to see it start no later than the Middle Primary. In contrast, only about 12% support the present starting time of the Lower Secondary School.

Conclusions

Although the number of people surveyed (300) is not as great as in most large commercial surveys, the results here seem sufficiently similar to those cited earlier to suggest that this survey provides a reasonable basis on which to seek insights into the public assessment of language teaching, reasons for its present state, and desirable directions for future change. This is particularly so when the results obtained accord so closely with what, from a theoretical point of view, is desirable.

The first general conclusion one can draw is that the present situation and many recent policy decisions, at least in Queensland and undoubtedly elsewhere, are not only detrimental to language teaching but also ill-accord with what the public wants. For language teachers, this is both ironic and insightful when many such decisions are justified by administrators at both the school and systemic levels on the grounds of democratic choice, public demand, or public apathy. It is, perhaps, significant that decisions that reduce the extent of language teaching lead to easier timetabling, to a reduction or diversion of resources, or to the elimination of a subject whose skill-based nature and long-term work requirements fit it with difficulty into a curriculum increasingly dominated by educational permissiveness and immediate interest gratification [see Perkins 1979, p.458 for the Presidential Commission's comment on similarly expedient and detrimental decision-making in the United States].

Secondly, this survey shows that the support in the Australian community for the teaching of languages is very strong. This fact contrasts with the commonly held belief that social attitudes to language learning are adverse [cf. Committee on Foreign Languages, Australian Academy of the Humanities 1975:26; Working Party on Languages and Linguistics, Australian Universities Commission 1976:29]. In reality, a large majority of people want to see language learning, if not universally compulsory, at least strongly encouraged and possibly made compulsory for one or two years. This clearly stated expression of opinion, regularly reiterated in other surveys such as those referred to earlier, is contrary to what has been occurring in Queensland and probably in most States where timetabling policies and the advice of Principals and guidance officers have helped to dissuade students from taking a language. In Queensland, for instance, fewer than one-third of Grade 9 students now take a language. In addition,

the recent decision by the Curriculum Development Centre to exclude languages from its core curriculum recommendations has to be deplored on educational grounds and criticized for its failure to take account of the wishes of Australian society.

The reality as reflected in this survey and in others cited earlier is that society supports the notion of at least strong encouragement for students to learn a language. It may well be, as is commonly said and as the difference in this survey between the attitudes of students and the general public suggests, that people want language learning for others but not themselves. However, this is where education policy-makers must step in. If rational, needs-based arguments as well as social attitudes suggest that students ought to be encouraged to learn a language, then policy decisions to effect this should be taken and implemented. For too long, educational decision-makers at every level, principals, politicians, tertiary institutions, and administrators, have mouthed pious words about multiculturalism, internationalism, and the value of language study and then have shrugged their responsibility off onto immature, adolescent students. They have gone further, of course, since decisions are made, in Queensland at least, that students must take English, Mathematics and Science while so-called "democracy in education" (which this survey has shown is not democracy at all) is permitted only with subjects such as foreign languages. If we are serious as a nation about multiculturalism and language learning, if we are serious about attainment in the "basics" and the promotion of cognitive, social, and linguistic development, then policy decisions must be taken and implemented in such a way that most students will undertake language learning for such time and in such conditions as will lead to worthwhile practical results. In no country in the world where language skills are valued and language teaching is secure is the decision whether or not a language is to be learned left to

the inexperience, the immature consideration, and the restricted social understanding of children and adolescents. Rather, in most European, African, and Asian countries, policy decisions have been taken by politicians and educationalists alike which result in the learning of a second or third language by all students. If it is acceptable that a democratic society demand that its citizens be educated, it should also be acceptable that it ensure that the education its children experience meet their real needs in the society and world in which they live. When, additionally, the overwhelming evidence is that language learning is justified not only by the students' life needs but also by the wishes of the majority of the people as reflected in surveys such as this one, then the decision-makers have an obligation to devise and implement policies that support language learning and make it effective. The United States, that bastion of democracy and individual choice, has taken the first step towards this with the recommendation from the President's Commission that language requirements be re-introduced at all levels of education [Perkins 1979]. The British debate on the core curriculum seems to be leading to the same decision [see *Times Educational Supplement*, November 16th, 1979]. For Australia, also, if we are serious about multiculturalism and internationalism and if the education system is to reflect the wishes of the society, policy decisions must replace empty words and lead to the re-establishment of a viable and efficient language learning system in which most, if not all, students acquire practical skills in a second language.

Thirdly, this survey has salutory lessons for language teachers. Too often, teachers and language teaching administrators have seemed to grasp at the straw of adverse social attitudes as an inverted means of endorsing their current practices instead of exerting themselves to struggle out of their desperate situation by seeking more relevant goals and more

effective methods. To be specific, this survey lays much of the blame for the present decline on inappropriate courses, a lack of practical objectives, poor attainment levels, and poor teaching. Perhaps this blame is unduly severe and social opinion is in turn grasping at straws to cover their dislike of the inevitable difficulty of language learning. Nevertheless, there is evidence that where courses offer practical skills and thus come closer to meeting the demands of learners and society at large, enrolments remain healthier. The survey of the Australian Academy of the Humanities [1975:33] noted this trend in enrolments in the early 1970's and my own survey in 1975 [Ingram 1977] found that, in contrast to the wishes expressed in the present survey, most matriculation courses in Australia remained largely grammar-translation-literature in orientation. Clearly, if language teaching is to meet the demands of society, it must ensure that practical, especially oral, communication skills are developed to a useful level of proficiency. The present attainment of Level 1 or, at best, Level 1+ in the four macroskills on the Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings [cf. Ingram 1977] does not meet this requirement. If it is to be met, we must, as language teachers, be prepared to re-think our methods, set practical objectives focussing on useful development of oral skills, and make more use of the resources that exist in the Australian community to provide increased, real language practice and, incidentally, to improve the students' attitudes towards other cultures [see Ingram 1979].

Fourthly, these issues and the survey results themselves impinge on the decisions of administrators. If practical proficiency is to be attained, both theoretical arguments and the clearly stated views of the Subjects surveyed require that the time allocated to language teaching be increased. Two possibilities exist: first, that the hours allocated in Secondary School be increased and, second, that language teaching be

extended into the Primary School. A useful level of proficiency requires at least Level 2 (Minimum Social Proficiency) on the ASLPR. The best available information would suggest that at least 500 contact hours are required for well-educated, motivated, adult English-speaking learners of average aptitude to reach this level in an intensive course in a Romance language [Foreign Service Institute School of Language Studies 1973]. In the unintensive foreign language learning situation in schools, the contact time required is greater and not less than 750 to 800 hours. Present High School contact time is rarely over 500 hours, clearly insufficient to enable learners to reach a useful level of proficiency. Nevertheless, even though this would suggest that High School contact time ought to be increased, in Queensland, the contrary is being proposed with the average allocation being set at 105 minutes a week for Grades 8 to 10, a reduction of at least one period a week. Such an administrative decision is severely detrimental to language learning and is clearly contrary to the wishes of the society that practical proficiency levels be attained. It is also directly contrary to the expressed views of the people surveyed, fewer than 1% of whom supported a reduction in time allocation. Rather than this, language classes should be held daily in the High School, re-timetabling to allow extended periods of intensive language classes should be considered, and total time allocation should be increased by extending language teaching into the Primary School.

This leads, then, to the fifth major implication of the survey, viz., that Primary School language teaching is wanted by an overwhelming proportion of the people. If the education system of a democratic society has to respect the wishes of the people, as is frequently claimed when a decision adverse to language teaching is being justified, then language teaching should be introduced as an integral and normal part of the Primary School curriculum. In addition of course, this decision is also indicated as

desirable on such theoretical grounds as enhanced language proficiency, extended time allocation, advantages to informal learning, attitude development, maintenance of ethnic languages and cultures, and the favourable effect language learning has on cognitive skills and intellectual, personality and affective development.

Sixth, there is clear need to diversify the languages taught if the wishes of the people are to be met. Nevertheless, though community language teaching is supported by the survey results, it is also clear that reasons for language learning other than the needs of multiculturalism are recognized and a place for "traditional" and Asian languages is also acknowledged. In particular, there would seem no social justification for seeking to reduce the teaching of French and German. All groups surveyed placed French as the language most supported with German second or third and, even though this finding was undoubtedly influenced by the fact that people often tend, in surveys, to support the status quo, the result must be considered significant. Nevertheless, there is solid support for diversifying the languages offered. Such diversification should not be seen in the context of inter-language rivalry with the place of one being downgraded to allow others to be taught. Rather, it should be remembered that language students amount, today, to only about one-fifth of the school population and, rather than languages seeming to compete against each other, their advocates would be better advised to pull together to try to extend their proportion of the total "market". To fight over one-fifth of the student "market" is absurd when four-fifths fails to experience the benefit of any language learning. By diversifying the languages offered, the clear intention must be to make language learning more relevant to learners and so attract more to it.

Furthermore, this survey reflects the fact, also underlined by sheer commonsense, that different people can have different reasons for learning a language, reasons that will resolve themselves on different language choices; the education system, if it is to meet the needs of the society, must offer a wide choice. This does not mean that every school should offer all the languages but structures and services must be found to allow learners the choice of the language that meets their own interests and needs. Regionalisation, subsidized transport, and an extension of the Saturday School system are some of the possibilities that need to be considered. In this way, rather than administrators or teachers deciding which language should be learned, opportunities can be given to allow learners to choose, it being remembered that the essential educational, cultural and attitudinal benefits of language learning can be attained through the learning of any language.

In conclusion, though this survey does not, in general terms, provide results much different from other surveys, it does reinforce many of the facts that they have shown and, in particular, that attitudes in the community are favourable to language learning. Rather than adverse societal attitudes being the principal cause of the malaise in language teaching, the root causes lie in the inappropriateness and ineffectiveness of what the language teaching system has offered and the absurdity, expedience, and damaging effects of many of the administrative decisions taken. If language teaching is to be restored to its rightful, central place in education in a multicultural, multilingual nation and world, we must, both language teachers and school administrators, re-examine our policies, identify the real needs of our students, set new and relevant objectives, and adopt new curricula and methods that will ensure that the objectives desired by the society are met. This survey can reassure us that the worth of what we, as language teachers, can offer is recognized but,

equally, it should convince us that we must scrupulously and rigorously re-assess and re-structure what we do so that all children are able to experience good language learning opportunities that will provide them with worthwhile, practical skills in their second language.

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APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

MOUNT GRAVATT COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

ATTITUDES TO SECOND LANGUAGE STUDY : A SURVEY

1. Nationality _____

2. Residential Suburb _____

3. Country of Birth _____

4. How long have you lived in Australia? _____

5. Parents' Country of Birth _____

6. What is your level of education?

   Nil _____

   Primary School _____

   Secondary School _____

   Tertiary or Technical _____

7. What languages do you speak? (Write in the name of the language)

   Native language _____

   Fluent _____

   Moderately fluent _____

   Not at all fluent _____

8. Did you learn a language at school?

   Yes _____

   No _____

9. If so, which one? _____

10. ADULTS: What is your occupation? _____

11. ADULTS: Are your children studying a language at school?

    Secondary Yes _____ Primary Yes _____

    No _____ No _____

12. ADULTS: Would you like your children to be studying languages?

Secondary Yes _____ Primary Yes _____

No _____ No _____

13. STUDENTS: What are you studying?

Year: _____

Institution: _____

Subjects: _____

_____

MOUNT GRAVATT COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

ATTITUDE TO SECOND LANGUAGE STUDY : A SURVEY

1. Should learning a foreign language in Queensland schools be:

   Compulsory for all _____

   Compulsory for some _____ For whom? _____

   Strongly encouraged for all _____

   Available to all but optional _____

   Not offered at all _____

   Other _____

   (Tick one)

2. Officially foreign language study is compulsory only in Grade 8. Should the compulsory period in High Schools be extended to:

   Grade 9 _____

   Grade 10 _____

   Grade 12 _____

   Not extended _____

   Other _____

   (Tick one)

3. Should a foreign language be required for entry to university by:

   All students _____

   Students doing Humanities/Arts _____

   Students doing Science _____

   Students doing Medicine _____

   Students doing technological studies such as "Engineering" _____

   Not required _____

   (Tick one)

4. Since Queensland is a multilingual and multicultural State, do you believe that, in a Teachers' College, a foreign language should be:

PRIMARY		SECONDARY	
Compulsory for all	____	Compulsory for all	____
Strongly encouraged for all	____	Strongly encouraged for all	____
Available to all but optional	____	Available to all but optional	____
Not offered at all	____	Not offered at all	____
Other _____		Other _____	

(Tick one in each column)

5. Which of the following languages should be taught in our schools?

An Aboriginal language	____	Classical Greek	____	Latin	____
Arabic	____	Modern Greek	____	Pacific Language	____
Chinese	____	Indonesian	____	Russian	____
Esperanto	____	Italian	____	Serbo-Croatian	____
French	____	Japanese	____	Spanish	____
German	____			Vietnamese	____

Other _____

(Tick those you favour)

6. For what purpose should languages be taught in school?

To be well educated	____
To communicate with others	____
To understand another culture	____
To develop better attitudes to people from other cultures	____
To develop intellectual discipline	____
To have access to knowledge in other languages	____
To improve one's own language	____
Other _____	

(Tick up to three)

7. Which skill is the most important for students to develop?

To speak and understand _____

To read _____

To write _____

To translate _____

Other _____

(Tick one)

8. What do you believe are the main reasons for the sharp decline that has occurred in the number of students learning a foreign language in Secondary Schools?

The wrong languages are taught _____

The level of proficiency students reach is too low _____

Too much emphasis on literature and translation instead of practical skills _____

Languages are too hard _____

Languages reduce a student's Tertiary Entrance (T.E.) Score _____

Competition with other subjects _____

Languages don't help employment prospects _____

Lack of jobs requiring a language _____

Languages are too boring _____

Other subjects are easier _____

Other subjects are more useful _____

Other _____

(Tick up to three)

9. How do you think language teaching could be improved?

Use better teaching methods ____

Reduce the time spent each week ____

Have daily lessons ____

Increase the total time spent in studying them ____

Have teachers who are more fluent in the language ____

Use more native speakers for conversation practice ____

Make textbooks more interesting ____

No change: it is fine as it is ____

By stressing speaking skills ____

By encouraging contact with native speakers in the community ____

Others _____

(Tick up to three)

10. At what level should children start learning a foreign language in our school system?

Pre-school ____

Lower Primary (Grades 1-2) ____

Middle Primary (Grades 3-5) ____

Upper Primary (Grades 6-7) ____

Lower Secondary (Grades 8-10) ____

Upper Secondary (Grades 11-12) ____

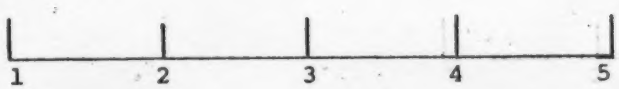
College or University ____

Other _____

(Tick one)

11. Where would you rate the success of foreign language teaching at present?

Total failure — Highly successful



24.

TABLE 1: SURVEY RESULTS

(N.B. Unless otherwise indicated respondents were permitted to mark one box only in response to each question.)

Populations		General Public											
Samples	Students	Migrants			Australian-born			Non-Eng.-L1		Eng.-L1		Total	
Sub-samples		Non-Eng.-L1	Eng.-L1	Tot.	Non-Eng.-L1	Eng.-L1	Tot.						
Sample Size	100 %	66	34	%	18	82	%	84	%	116	%	200	%
1. Should learning a foreign language in Queensland schools be:													
Compulsory for all	10	22	9	31	1	11	12	23	27.4	20	17.2	43	21.5
Compulsory for some	1	2	1	3	1	12	13	3	3.6	13	11.2	16	8
Strongly encouraged for all	43	28	15	43	8	34	42	36	42.9	49	42.2	85	42.5
Available to all but optional	46	13	9	22	8	25	33	21	25	34	29.3	55	27.5
Not offered at all	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1.2	0	0	1	0.5
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2. Officially foreign language study is compulsory only in Grade 8. Should the compulsory period in High Schools be extended to:													
Grade 9	10	5	2	7	3	6	9	8	9.5	8	9.5	16	8
Grade 10	18	12	6	18	5	12	17	17	20.2	18	21.4	35	17.5
Grade 12	6	36	8	44	3	24	27	39	46.4	32	38.1	71	35.5
Not Extended	56	11	15	26	5	32	37	16	19	47	56	63	31.5
Other	10	2	3	5	2	8	10	4	4.8	11	13.1	15	7.5
3. Should a foreign language be required for entry to university by:													
All students	8	25	8	33	5	23	28	30	35.7	31	26.7	61	30.5
Students doing Humanities/Arts	17	13	8	21	6	23	29	19	22.6	31	26.7	50	25
Students doing Science	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	1.7	2	1
Students doing Medicine	2	8	7	15	1	4	5	9	10.7	11	9.5	20	10
Students doing technological studies such as "Engineering"	0	2	0	2	0	1	1	2	2.4	1	0.9	3	1.5
Not Required	73	18	11	29	6	29	35	24	28.6	40	34.5	64	32

Populations	Students	General Public											
Samples		Migrants			Australian-born			Non-Eng.-L1		Eng.-L1		Total	
Sub-samples		Non-Eng.-L1	Eng.-L1	Tot.	Non-Eng.-L1	Eng.-L1	Tot.						
Sample Size	100 %	66	34	%	18	82	%	84	%	116	%	200	%
4. Since Queensland is a multilingual and multicultural State, do you believe that, in a Teachers' College, a foreign language should be;													
PRIMARY:													
Compulsory for all	6	18	7	25	1	12	13	19	22.6	19	16.4	38	19
Strongly encouraged for all	30	30	15	45	11	34	45	41	48.8	49	42.2	90	45
Available to all but optional	56	17	12	29	6	33	39	23	27.4	45	38.8	68	34
Not offered at all	8	1	0	1	0	3	3	1	1.2	3	2.6	4	2
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SECONDARY:													
Compulsory for all	5	25	10	35	0	15	15	25	29.8	25	21.6	50	25
Strongly encouraged for all	29	28	14	42	12	31	43	40	47.6	45	38.8	85	42.5
Available to all but optional	62	13	10	23	6	35	41	19	22.6	45	38.8	64	32
Not offered at all	4	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0.9	1	0.5
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5. Which of the following languages should be taught in our schools? (Any number selected)		275	159	434 %	83	507	590 %	358		666		1024	
An Aboriginal language	8	6	9	3.5	4	22	4.4	10	2.8	31	4.7	41	4
Arabic	0.9	4	1	1.2	1	13	2.4	5	1.4	14	2.1	19	1.9
Chinese	8	21	12	7.6	3	36	6.6	24	6.7	48	7.2	72	7
Esperanto	4.3	12	10	5.1	0	21	3.6	12	3.4	31	4.7	43	4.2
French	10.9	46	24	16.1	15	50	11	61	17	74	11.1	135	13.2
German	9.5	27	17	10.1	11	54	11	38	10.6	71	10.7	109	10.6
Classical Greek	1.2	4	2	1.4	0	10	1.7	4	1.1	12	1.8	16	1.6
Modern Greek	5.8	20	3	5.3	13	23	6.1	33	9.2	26	3.9	59	5.8
Indonesian	6.4	15	16	7.1	3	43	7.8	18	5	59	8.9	77	7.5
Italian	8	28	12	9.2	10	35	7.6	38	10.6	47	7.1	85	8.3
Japanese	10.9	24	16	9.2	4	51	9.3	28	7.8	67	10	95	9.3
Latin	5.4	19	10	6.7	5	21	4.4	24	6.7	31	4.7	55	5.4
Pacific Language	4.7	5	7	2.8	1	28	4.9	6	1.7	35	5.3	41	4

Populations	Students	General Public											
Samples		Migrants			Australian-born			Non-Eng.-L_1		Eng.-L_1		Total	
Sub-samples		Non-Eng.-L_1	Eng.-L_1	Tot.	Non-Eng.-L_1	Eng.-L_1	Tot.						
Sample Size	100 %	66	34	%	18	82	%	84	%	116	%	200	%
Quest. 5 (cont.)													
Russian	4.3	13	7	4.6	3	24	4.6	16	4.5	31	4.7	47	4.6
Serbo-Croatian	1.3	4	1	1.2	0	11	1.9	4	1.1	12	1.8	16	1.6
Spanish	3.1	14	7	4.8	6	30	6.1	20	5.6	37	5.6	57	5.6
Vietnamese	6.6	13	5	4.1	4	35	6.6	17	4.7	40	6	57	5.7
Other	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6. For what purpose should languages be taught in School? (up to three selected)		163	83	246 %	49	231	280 %	212		314		526	
To be well educated	3.9	13	6	2.4	2	5	2.5	15	7.1	11	3.5	26	4.9
To communicate with others	26.7	46	22	8.9	15	65	28.6	61	28.8	87	27.7	148	28.1
To understand another culture	23.6	33	17	6.9	8	51	21.1	41	19.3	68	21.7	109	20.7
To develop better attitudes to people from other cultures	20.5	36	17	6.9	13	59	25.7	49	23.1	76	24.2	125	23.8
To develop intellectual discipline	3.5	3	3	1.2	2	7	3.2	5	2.4	10	3.2	15	2.9
To have access to knowledge in other languages	13.4	20	11	4.5	9	33	15	29	13.7	44	14	73	13.9
To improve one's own language	6.3	12	7	2.8	0	8	2.9	12	5.7	15	4.8	27	5.1
Other	1.9	0	0	0	0	3	1.1	0	0	3	1	3	.6
7. Which skill is the most important for students to develop?													
To speak and understand	94	54	28	82	18	67	85	72	85.7	95	81.9	167	83.5
To read	3	5	5	10	0	6	6	5	6	11	9.5	16	8
To write	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1.2	1	.9	2	1
To translate	3	5	0	5	0	5	5	5	6	5	4.3	10	5
Other	0	1	1	2	0	3	3	1	1.2	4	3.4	5	2.5

Populations	Students	General Public											
Samples		Migrants			Australian-born			Non-Eng.-L_1		Eng.-L_1		Total	
Sub-samples		Non-Eng.-L_1	Eng.-L_1	Tot.	Eng.-L_1	Eng.-L_1	Tot.						
Sample Size	100 %	66	34	%	18	82	%	84	%	116	%	200	%
8. What do you believe are the main reasons for the sharp decline that has occurred in the number of students learning a foreign language in Secondary Schools? (Up to 3 selected)		156	85	241	48	226	274	204		311		515	
				%			%						
The wrong languages are taught	14.7	10	8	7.5	5	26	11.3	15	7.4	34	10.9	49	9.5
The level of proficiency students reach is too low	6.6	22	9	12.9	7	39	16.8	29	14.2	48	15.4	77	15
Too much emphasis on literature and translation instead of practical skills	21.9	24	13	15.4	13	35	18.2	37	18.1	48	15.4	85	16.5
Languages are too hard	1.5	10	3	5.4	0	3	1.1	10	4.9	6	1.9	16	3.1
Languages reduce a student's Tertiary Entrance (T.E.) Score	4.3	4	1	2.1	3	6	3.1	7	3.4	7	2.3	14	2.7
Competition with other subjects	12.5	24	10	14.1	3	24	9.9	27	13.2	34	10.9	61	11.8
Languages don't help employment prospects	8.6	11	12	9.5	4	31	12.8	15	7.4	43	13.8	58	11.3
Lack of jobs requiring a language	9.4	18	7	10.4	2	21	8.4	20	9.8	28	9	48	9.3
Languages are too boring	4.7	4	2	2.5	2	4	2.2	6	2.9	6	1.9	12	2.3
Other subjects are easier	5.4	12	10	9.1	6	10	5.8	18	8.8	20	6.4	38	7.4
Other subjects are more useful	10.2	9	5	5.8	3	20	8.4	12	5.9	25	8	37	7.2
Other	2.7	8	5	5.4	0	7	2.6	8	3.9	12	3.9	20	3.9
9. How do you think language teaching could be improved? (Up to 3 selected)		160	81	249	46	244	290	206		325		531	
Use better teaching methods	17.1	24	16	16.1	6	32	13.1	30	14.6	48	14.8	78	14.7
Reduce the time spent each week	0.3	3	0	1.2	0	0	0	3	1.5	0	0	3	0.6
Have daily lessons	4.6	18	7	10	5	24	10	23	11.2	31	9.5	54	10.2
Increase the total time spent in studying them	13.4	12	3	6	3	13	5.5	15	7.3	16	4.9	31	5.8
Have teachers who are more fluent in the language	13.5	30	4	13.7	10	46	19.3	40	19.4	50	15.4	90	16.9

Populations	Students	General Public											
Samples		Migrants			Australian-born			Non-Eng.-L_1		Eng.-L_1		Total	
Sub-samples		Non-Eng.-L_1	Eng.-L_1	Tot.	Eng.-L_1	Eng.-L_1	Tot.						
Sample Size	100 %	66	34	%	18	82	%	84	%	116	%	200	%
Quest. 9 (cont.)													
Use more native speakers for conversation practice	13.8	25	16	16.5	6	42	14.6	31	15	58	17.8	89	16.8
Make textbooks more interesting	6.7	11	5	6.4	4	16	6.9	15	7.3	21	6.5	36	6.8
No change: it is fine as it is	0.3	1	0	1.2	1	1	0.7	4	1.9	1	0.3	5	0.9
By stressing speaking skills	10.8	11	12	9.2	3	16	6.6	14	6.8	28	8.6	42	7.9
By encouraging contact with native speakers in the community	17.4	21	13	13.7	8	51	20.3	29	14.1	64	19.7	93	17.5
Others	1.6	2	5	2.8	0	3	1	2	1	8	2.5	10	1.9
10. At what level should children start learning a foreign language in our school system?													
Pre-school	9	14	3	17	2	15	17	16	19	18	15.5	34	17
Lower Primary (Grades 1-2)	22	12	9	21	3	18	21	15	17.9	27	23.3	42	21
Middle Primary (Grades 3-5)	28	17	12	29	7	22	29	24	28.6	34	29.3	58	29
Upper Primary (Grades 6-7)	27	14	4	18	3	14	17	17	20.2	18	15.5	35	17.5
Lower Secondary (Grades 8-10)	11	8	4	12	3	9	12	11	13.1	13	11.2	24	12
Upper Secondary (Grades 11-12)	3	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	4	3.4	4	2
College or University	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	1	2	3	0	0	0	1	1.2	2	1.7	3	1.5
11. Where would you rate the success of foreign language teaching at present?													
Total Failure 1	10	8	1	9	1	7	8	9	10.7	8	6.9	17	8.5
1½	0	8	4	12	0	3	3	8	9.5	7	6	15	7.5
2	34	21	15	36	2	40	42	23	27.4	55	47.4	78	39
2½	25	4	5	9	5	13	18	9	10.7	18	15.5	27	13.5
3	23	17	5	22	4	11	15	21	25	16	13.8	37	18.5
3½	7	0	0	0	2	3	5	2	2.4	3	2.6	5	2.5
4	1	5	1	6	4	1	5	9	10.7	2	1.7	11	5.5
4½	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0.9	1	0.5
Highly Successful 5	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	3	3.6	0	0	3	1.5
Don't Know	0	0	3	3	0	3	3	0	0	6	5.2	6	3

TABLE 2: ORDERS OF PREFERENCE in QUESTIONS 5, 6, 8 and 9

Q.5.

	Order of Preference				
	S+	M	A	Non-Eng.-L_1	Eng.-L_1
An Aboriginal language	5	13	12.5	13	11.5
Arabic	17	16.5	15	15	15
Chinese	5	5	6.5	6.5	5
Esperanto	12.5	9	14	12	11.5
French	1.5	1	1.5	1	1
German	3	2	1.5	2.5	2
Classical Greek	16	15	17	16.5	16.5
Modern Greek	9	8	8.5	4	14
Indonesian	8	6	4	9	4
Italian	5	3.5	5	2.5	6
Japanese	1.5	3.5	3	5	3
Latin	10	7	12.5	6.5	11.5
Pacific Language	11	14	10	14	9
Russian	12.5	11	11	11	11.5
Serbo-Croatian	15	16.5	16	16.5	16.5
Spanish	14	10	8.5	8	8
Vietnamese	7	12	6.5	10	7
Other	18	18	18	18	18

rho M/A .9
S/M .84
S/A .87
N/E .79

Q.6

	Order of Preference				
	St	M	A	Non-Eng. -L_1	Eng. -L_1
To be well educated	6	6	7	5	6
To communicate with others	1	1	1	1	1
To understand another culture	2	2.5	3	3	3
To develop better attitudes to people from other cultures	3	2.5	2	2	2
To develop intellectual discipline	7	7	5	7	7
To have access to knowledge in other languages	4	4	4	4	4
To improve one's own language	5	5	6	6	5
Other	8	8	8	8	8

rho M/A .99
S/M .99
S/A .98
N/E .996

Q.8

	Order of Preference				
	St	M	A	Non-Eng. -L_1	Eng. -L_1
The wrong languages are taught	2	7	4	6.5	4.5
The level of proficiency students reach is too low	7	3	2	2	1.5
Too much emphasis on literature and translation instead of practical skills	1	1	1	1	1.5
Languages are too hard	12	9.5	12	9	11.5
Languages reduce a student's Tertiary Entrance (T.E.) Score	10	12	9	11	10
Competition with other subjects	3	2	5	3	4.5
Languages don't help employment prospects	6	5	3	6.5	3
Lack of jobs requiring a language	5	4	6.5	4	6
Languages are too boring	9	11	11	12	11.5
Other subjects are easier	8	6	8	5	8
Other subjects are more useful	4	8	6.5	8	7
Other	11	9.5	10	10	9

rho M/A .82
S/M .72
S/A .8
N/E .85

Q.9

	Order of Preference				
	St	M	A	Non-Eng. -L_1	Eng. -L_1
Use better teaching methods	2	2	4	3	4
Reduce the time spent each week	10.5	10	11	10	11
Have daily lessons	8	5	5	5	5
Increase the total time spent in studying them	5	8	8	6.5	8
Have teachers who are more fluent in the language	4	3.5	2	1	3
Use more native speakers for conversation practice	3	1	3	2	2
Make textbooks more interesting	7	7	6	6.5	7
No change: it is fine as it is	10.5	10	10	9	10
By stressing speaking skills	6	6	7	8	6
By encouraging contact with native speakers in the community	1	3.5	1	4	1
Others	9	9	9	11	9

rho M/A .91
S/M .89
S/A .87
N/E .88